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ABSTRACT

The issue of minimal competency testing for high school graduation and grade to grade promotion as a method of emphasizing the teaching of basic skills and guaranteeing that the high school diploma will "mean something" has received widespread legislative attention in recent years. In this report, data pertaining to the enforcement of minimal competency testing in each State are presented. Specific information is provided by State with regard to Federal legislation (pending), State legislation (enacted and failed), State board of education rulings, State department of education activity and local district activity. It is noted that as of April 1976, four States had enacted legislation and four State boards of education had adopted regulations mandating some form of minimal competency testing. Bills were pending in eight State legislatures, and five State boards had studies underway. The data show that: (1) eleven States have enacted legislation and twenty State boards have adopted regulations regarding minimal competency testing; (2) studies or hearings are in progress in nineteen other States; and (3) State boards are more likely to include life skills and other subjects in addition to the basics than are State legislatures. (WI)

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UPDATE VII: MINIMAL COMPETENCY TESTING

* Federal Legislation
* State Legislation
* State Board of Education Rulings
* State Department of Education Activity
* Local District Programs

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November 15, 1977

UPDATE VII: MINIMAL COMPETENCY TESTING

Report No. 105

Prepared by Chris Pipho, Associate Director
ECS Research and Information Department
Russell B. Vlaanderen, Director

Copies of this report are available from the Education Commission of the States, 1860 Lincoln Street, Suite 300, Denver, Colorado 80295. For each book, please send $6.50 to cover costs, including postage and handling. Prepayment is required.

INTRODUCTION

Minimal competency testing for high school graduation and grade-to-grade promotion continues to be one of the most explosive issues on the educational scene today, from the standpoint of both controversy and spread of practice. There seems to be ample middle ground in the controversy but few have chosen to tread it. Enthusiastic proponents believe they have found a way to force greater emphasis on the basic skills and to guarantee that the high school diploma will mean that certain skills and facts will have been mastered by the graduate rather than mean that the graduate has "put in his time." They cannot understand the reluctance opponents have in placing confidence in standardized tests or in "guaranteeing" a certain minimum level of proficiency for all students regardless of ability. Opponents generally see the movement as a punitive measure against the schools and as a means of holding the schools and the teachers accountable for results that are dependent on a host of variables over which they have no control. One faction asks: "Just what are the competencies you speak of, who is going to define them, how are the standards to be set, how are they to be measured and what about life skills, citizenship, moral development and art?" The answer: "We're talking about reading, writing and arithmetic--just teach those well and the students will pick up the rest. Use standardized tests--you've been doing it for years--so we'll know how our kids stack up with the rest." Thoughtful people, however, are beginning to pay serious attention to the problems attendant to the whole concept.

Probably no concept in recent years has received such widespread attention, either legislatively or by state board adoption. Since April of 1976, the Research and Information Department has issued six "Updates" in an attempt to keep pace with developments. This is the seventh. As of April 15, 1976, four states had enacted legislation and four state boards of education had adopted regulations mandating some form of minimal competency testing. Bills were pending in eight state legislatures and five state boards had studies under way. Today, 11 states have enacted legislation and 20 state boards have adopted regulations, for a total of 31. Activity is occurring in the other 19 states either at the local level, by state department study or legislative hearings. The debate has reached the federal level with proponents and opponents of nationwide standards testifying before Congress. Representative Mottl of Ohio has introduced two bills that would impose national standards in the absence of state standards. It appears at this writing, however, that the mandatory nature of the bills will be altered.

With this publication, the Education Commission of the States has attempted to provide you with the current status of the concept with no editorializing or in-depth analyses. Preliminary analysis reveals one interesting facet, however--state boards are more apt to add life skills and other subjects in addition to the 3 R's than are state legislatures. The reader should be aware that ECS has adopted no official position on minimal competency testing. It has conducted four regional conferences on the subject and has received much valuable input from the conferees. The ECS Policy Committee is studying the issue with the goal of developing a policy statement for consideration at the 1978 annual meeting of ECS.

Russell B. Vlaanderen, Director
Research and Information Department
Education Commission of the States

MINIMAL COMPETENCY TESTING

STATE ACTIVITY

- Federal Legislation -- Pending
- State Legislation -- Enacted and Failed
- State Board of Education Rulings
- State Department of Education Activity
- Local District Activity (incomplete listing)

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For more information contact:

Dr. Richard Causey
Asst. Dir., Div. of Instruction
State Dept. of Ed., Room 607
State Office Building
Montgomery, Alabama 36130

(205) 832-3890

- 1978, Legislation:

As of November, no legislation had been pre-filed for the 1978 session.

- 1977, Local District:

On September 20, 1977 the Huntsville City School Board approved the Superintendent's proposal that an ad hoc committee be approved to engage in an in-depth study and develop a master plan for establishing a minimum competency standards program for high school graduation. The committee is scheduled to submit a master plan no later than July 1, 1978.

For more information contact:

Dr. Don Tuggs
Asst. Supt. for Instruction
Huntsville City Schools
P. O. Box 1256
Huntsville, Alabama 35807

(205) 539-2111

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ALASKA - 1977, State Department of Education: (Reported in Update VI, 6/1/77)

New high school graduation requirements adopted by the Alaska Department of Education permit local districts to graduate high school students on the basis of competency. To date no districts have adopted a total system of competency-based high school graduation. Local districts working on this problem are working on an identification of levels of competency -- these have been converted back to Carnegie Units or time requirements according to the state department of education.

A State Department of Education Steering Committee on Small Secondary Schools is exploring the whole issue of competency-based high school graduation.

Alaska's statewide assessment program, testing in grades 4 and 8, has not been used for developing competency high school graduation requirements or grade promotion.

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

The final report issued by the Steering Committee on Small Secondary Schools did

ALASKA - Fall 1977, State Department of Education (continued):

not make any recommendations on the subject of competency-based high school graduation.

The department of education is planning a district-by-district survey of competency-based activity later this school year.

- 1977, Local District:

Kodiac Island Borough School District
North Slope Borough School District
Southwest Regional Attendance Area
Adak School District
Galena School District
Juneau School District
Anchorage School District

For more information contact:

Richard Luther
Department of Program Development and Dissemination
State Department of Education
Pouch F
Juneau, Alaska 99801
(907) 465-2842

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ARIZONA - 1975, State Department of Education: (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

Effective January 1, 1976, school districts are required to have students receiving the standard eighth grade certificate able to read, write and compute at the sixth-grade level. High school students must demonstrate an ability to read, write and compute at the ninth-grade level.

- 1976, Legislation (Failed): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

SB 1138 (passed senate, died in house committee) This bill would have restricted current state board ruling by not allowing the state uniform achievement evaluation to be used to establish minimum achievement levels.

- 1977, Legislation (Failed): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

H 2160 Would require the state school superintendent and the state board of education to develop a statewide standard testing program for grades 1-12. The results of the tests would be correlated to individual pupils' class sizes, teachers, teachers' experience and salaries. The state board of education would also be mandated to divide class time of 2nd - 6th grades into "verbal and quantitative segments" and further stipulates there would be no unauthorized segment skipping.

The bill also contained an "early out" provision by allowing any person (age 18 or

ARIZONA - 1977, Legislation (Failed) (continued):

older was deleted) to take the General Educational Development (GED) tests and receive a high school certificate of equivalency if a passing score was achieved.

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

The state department of education is in the process of implementing a method of gathering information from each school district on compliance with the state board of education mandate on high school and 8th grade graduation. This data will be available at the end of the 1978 school year. Pretest guidelines and non-compliance penalties are under study.

For more information contact:

Dr. Barbara Davis
Arizona State Department of Education
1535 West Jefferson
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
(602) 271-4880

- 1978 Legislation:

Legislation similar to H 2160 is expected. Nothing had been pre-filed by mid-November of 1977.

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ARKANSAS - 1977, Legislation (Failed): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

HB 609 Educational Assessment. A broad statewide and school district testing bill. It was heavily amended by the house education committee but kept the following provisions:

> "State department of education shall by June 1, 1978 develop minimum performance standards for graduation from secondary schools and minimum performance educational goals for various grades and subject areas within the public schools."

The "minimum performance educational goals" are to include the basic skill areas of reading, writing and mathematics.

- 1977, Legislation (Enacted):

Act 484 Mandates the state board of education, after conducting statewide hearings, to establish goals of education for Arkansas. The Act also calls for the setting of minimum performance education goals.

Act 514 Requires each school district to annually report to the state department of education information on all national standarized achievement tests administered to students. This information is to include: subject areas tested, grade levels, date of test and test results. The data is to serve as a basis for comparison by category.

ARKANSAS - (continued)

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education Activity:

The department of education has established a statewide goals of education committee of 91 people. County and school district meetings have been held during the fall. Recommendations of this committee will be presented to the state board of education in December of 1977.

The process of setting minimum performance education goals for grades 3-6 & 8 will take place between December 1977 and March 1978.

For more information contact:

Dr. Sherman Peterson
Arkansas Department of Education
Capitol Mall
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201
(501) 371-1766

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CALIFORNIA - 1975-1976, Legislation (Enacted): Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

SB 1112 of 1972 and SB 1243 (providing for funding) of 1975 The two acts combined provide for the California High School Proficiency Test. Sixteen- and 17-year-olds, upon successful completion of the test, may be awarded a proficiency certificate legally equivalent to a high school diploma. They may leave high school if they pass the test and receive parent permission. The test covers the process areas of reading and computation and the content areas of consumer economics and mathematics.

SB 1502, Ch. 315 (1976) Will change the existing "early out" minimal competency test program by making it available to citizens over the age of 18. The effects of this law on the existing GED high school equivalency program are not clear.

AB 3408, Ch. 856 (1976) Requires districts to establish standards of proficiency in the basic skill areas, including reading, writing and computation. It also provides that students be tested at least once during grade 7 through 9 and twice between grades 10 and 11. Parent-student-principal-teacher conferences and remedial classes are to be arranged for those students who fail to demonstrate minimal proficiency. No student can receive a high school diploma after June 1980 unless he or she passes the proficiency test.

AB 2725, Ch. 473 (1976) Requires that examples of minimal academic standards for high school graduation be prepared and distributed by the California State Board of Education. This is to include criteria utilized by the department of education in developing standards for competency in basic skills for the high school proficiency exam. The effective date is January 1, 1977. (Note: Performance indicators were distributed to schools in April of 1977.)

CALIFORNIA - (continued)

- 1976, Legislation (Failed): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

SB 1731 The measure encompasses recommendations made by the RISE (Reform in Intermediate and Secondary Education) Commission. One of the provisions of the bill is a requirement for the testing of minimal competency in basic skills and other areas.

AB 2559 This bill prohibits the admission or promotion of an elementary grade pupil to any particular grade unless reading ability is at least equal to that prescribed for pupils in the next lower grade. Ability is to be determined in a manner prescribed by the state board of education.

ACR 195 Requests the state department of education to take necessary measures to ensure that no student will be passed to the second grade without the ability to know and write the alphabet, know basic language sounds, and pass a standard reading test developed by the department.

- 1977, Legislation (Failed):

AB 357 Would require elementary school districts by June 1, 1979, to adopt standards of proficiency in the basic skills. This bill would have students tested at least twice during the fourth through sixth grades and at least once from sixth through eighth grades. Conferences between pupil/parent/principal/teachers would be required if the pupil falls short of the standards. (Note: An amended partial version of this bill was included in enacted AB 65.)

- 1977, Legislation (Enacted):

AB 65, Ch. 894 Is the New Finance and Restructuring of Education Act. Included is a section on student progress in elementary and secondary education. In part, it reads as follows:

"51215. The governing board of each school district maintaining a junior or senior high school shall, by June 1, 1978, adopt standards of proficiency in basic skills for pupils attending school within its school district.

The governing board of each school district maintaining grades 6 or 8, or the equivalent, shall, by June 1, 1979, adopt standards of proficiency in basic skills for pupils attending such grades.

Such standards shall include, but need not be limited to, reading comprehension, writing, and computation skills, in the English language, necessary to success in school and life experiences, and shall be such as will enable individual achievement to be ascertained and evaluated. Differential standards and assessment procedures may be adopted for pupils with diagnosed learning disabilities.

Governing boards maintaining elementary or junior high schools located within a school district maintaining a high school shall adopt standards of proficiency in basic skills which are articulated with those standards adopted by the school district maintaining the high school.

Designated employees of all school districts located within a high school district and one or more designees of the high school district shall meet prior to June 1,

CALIFORNIA - 1977, Legislation (Enacted) (continued):

1979, to plan for articulation of elementary and high school proficiency standards, and as necessary thereafter to review the effectiveness of such articulation procedures.

Standards of proficiency shall be adopted by the governing board with the active involvement of parents broadly reflective of the socioeconomic composition of the district, administrators, teachers, counselors, and, with respect to standards in secondary schools, pupils.

51216. Beginning in the 1978-79 school year, the governing board of each district maintaining a junior or senior high school, and beginning in the 1979-80 school year, the governing board of each district maintaining an elementary school, shall take appropriate steps to ensure that individual pupil progress towards proficiency in basic skills is assessed in the English language during the regular instructional program at least once during the 4th through 6th grade experience, once during the 7th through 9th grade experience and twice during the 10th through 11th grade experience, provided that any pupil who demonstrates proficiency up to prescribed levels for graduation from high school need not be reassessed. Nothing in this section shall preclude any district from conducting an assessment of any pupil in English and in the native language of such pupil.

It is the intent of the Legislature that pupil assessments measure the progress of each pupil in mastering basic skills rather than the pupil's performance relative to his or her classmates.

In the case of any pupil who does not demonstrate sufficient progress toward mastery of basic skills so that he or she will be able to meet prescribed standards upon exit from the 6th, 8th, or 12th grade, whichever is appropriate, the principal shall arrange a conference among the principal or the principal's designee, the parent or guardian of the pupil, and a teacher familiar with the pupil's progress to discuss the results of the individual pupil assessment and recommended actions to further the pupil's progress.

The secondary school pupil shall attend the conference. The elementary school pupil shall attend the conference unless the principal's designee and the parent or guardian agree that such presence would not be in the pupil's best interest.

The pupil and the parent or guardian shall be requested in writing to attend the conference. Such notice shall be written in the primary language of the parent or guardian, whenever practicable.

Absent a response from the parent or guardian the school shall make a reasonable effort to contact him or her by other means to communicate directly the information contained in the written request.

At the conference, the principal or the principal's designee shall describe the instructional program which shall be provided to assist the pupil to master basic skills. If the parent or guardian does not attend the conference the principal or the principal's designee shall communicate such information by other means within 10 days of the date of the conference.

Instruction in basic skills shall be provided for any pupil who does not demonstrate

CALIFORNIA - 1977, Legislation (Enacted) (continued):

sufficient progress toward mastery of basic skills and shall continue until the pupil has been given numerous opportunities to achieve mastery.

51217. Subsequent to June 1980, no pupil shall receive a diploma of graduation from high school if he or she has not met the standards of proficiency in basic skills prescribed by the secondary school district governing board.

The state board of education shall, by February 1, 1978, prepare and distribute to each school district maintaining a junior or senior high school, and by October 1, 1978, prepare and distribute to each district maintaining an elementary school, a framework for assessing pupil proficiency in reading comprehension, writing, and computation skills. Such framework shall include a range of assessment items in each skill area. The assessment framework shall be provided solely to assist each school district in the development of its own pupil assessments as required by Section 51216.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize or permit the state board of education to adopt statewide minimum proficiency standards for high school graduation.

SEC. 43.5. Section 51225 of the Education Code is amended to read:

51225. No pupil shall receive a diploma of graduation from high school who has not completed the course of study prescribed by the governing board. Requirements for graduation shall include:

(a) English.
(b) American history.
(c) American government.
(d) Mathematics.
(e) Science.
(f) Physical education, unless the pupil has been exempted pursuant to the provisions of this code.
(g) Such other subjects as may be prescribed.

The governing board, with the active involvement of parents, administrators, teachers, and students, shall, by January 1, 1979, adopt alternative means for students to complete the prescribed course of study which may include practical demonstration of skills and competencies, work experience or other outside school experience, interdisciplinary study, independent study, and credit earned at a postsecondary institution. Requirements for graduation and specified alternative modes for completing the prescribed course of study shall be made available to students, parents, and the public."

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education Activity:

The early exit test is now moving into its third year of operation. The California high school proficiency test was given three times in 1976-77 with approximately 10,000 to 11,000 students and adults taking the test each time. Ten percent of each group tested has consisted of adults. Several follow-up studies of the program are in progress. The National Institute for Education (NIE) study should be completed late in 1977.

CALIFORNIA - Fall 1977, State Department of Education Activity (continued):

For more information contact:

Dale Carlson
California Department of Education
(916) 322-2200

The California Department of Education's Office of Program Evaluation and Research has completed and continues to work on a variety of assistance tools for school districts implementing the "Hart Law" (AB 3408) and the new AB 65. In November of 1977 the department field tested 1,400 test items for grades 7-9 & 11, School and Survival Skills. In the Spring of 1978, 600-900 test items for grades 5-7 will be field tested.

In October of 1977 all school districts received copies of A Technical Assistance Guide for Proficiency Assessment. Copies of this guide may be purchased by writing to:

Dick Stiles
Office of Program Evaluation
and Research
721 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, California 95814
(916) 445-0297

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COLORADO - 1975, Legislation (Enacted): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

SB 180 of 1975 (C.R.S. 22-32-109.5). The Act stipulates that if a local board of education imposes any special proficiency test for graduation from the 12th grade beyond the regular requirements for satisfactory completion of the courses and hours prescribed for graduation, the results of such tests shall be used by school districts to design regular or special classes to meet the needs of all children as indicated by overall test results. If a school board decides to impose such proficiency tests, such tests shall be given at least twice during each school year with initial testing to take place in the ninth grade. Any child who does not satisfactorily fulfill the requirements of special proficiency tests imposed under the provisions of the act "shall be provided with remedial or tutorial services during the school day in the subject area in which the test indicates deficiencies for graduation purposes. Such child shall be provided with these services from the time of the initial testing until such time as the results of the special proficiency test are satisfactory. Parents of children not satisfactorily fulfilling the requirements of a special proficiency test shall be provided with all special proficiency test scores for their child a minimum of once each semester."

- Fall 1977, Legislative Interim Action:

The interim committee on government expenditures has been studying secondary schools and the possibility of defining "basic education" and the need to have the school finance formula tied to the teaching of basic skills. The 1978 session of the Legislators is to consider only budget "Governor's Call" items. Bills not included in these two categories will have to wait for the next regular session in 1979.

COLORADO - Fall 1977, Legislative Interim Action (continued):

For more information contact:

Mr. Joe Douglass
Colorado Department of Education
State Office Building
Denver, Colorado 80203
(303) 892-3081

- 1977, Local District:

Denver Public Schools In 1959 the Denver Public Schools developed the Proficiency and Review tests (P&R), a minimum competency test for high school graduation. Since 1962 they have tested more than 40,000 students. The test contains subsections on mathematics, spelling, language and reading. Remedial classes are provided for those who do not pass the test.

At present, the P&R tests are administered in December and April of each year, in grades 9-12. High school pupils are programmed into established instructional programs in the basic skills areas to assist them in overcoming deficiencies. The P&R test, a secure instrument, has been revised once and is being considered for a second revision.

The Denver schools have a test under development for grades 3 & 6 for the identification of students needing remedial instruction.

For more information contact:

Barry Beal
Supervisor, Development and Evaluation
Denver Public Schools
900 Grant Street
Denver, Colorado 80203
(303) 837-1000

Englewood Public Schools The board of education has mandated that a functional competency test will be used as a requirement for high school graduation beginning with the class of 1980.

Englewood High School is currently piloting a one-semester course related to adult competencies.

For more information contact:

Bill Heitzsmith
Englewood High School
3800 South Logan
Englewood, Colorado 80110
(303) 781-7881 or 761-7050

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CONNECTICUT - 1976, Legislation (Enacted): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

Sub HB 5839 This proposal would have required students to take a proficiency exam prior to graduation from high school. Those students passing the examination would receive special notice to that effect on their high school diploma. The bill made no provisions for early exit but sought simply to establish uniform state standards of performance that would serve as minimum targets for secondary school education and improve the validity of the diploma issued to those successfully tested. (Note: This law was not implemented because Sec. 4 making implementation contingent upon finding at least $50,000 in federal or private funds was not met.)

- 1976, Legislation (Failed): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

HB 5836 This measure would have allowed high school graduates and nongraduates to receive a state certificate of achievement. It provided for exemption from the compulsory attendance age of 16, directed the state department of education to establish standards of competency in basic skills and a means of testing such competency, and would have allowed both high school graduates and nongraduates to obtain a state certificate of achievement upon passing a state-administered proficiency examination. The bill also protected the basic educational entitlement -- a flat grant based on Average Daily Members (ADM) -- to the extent that the amount of such state aid would not reflect the loss of up to one percent of the enrollment that might leave school after passing the examination.

HB 5837 Concerning early exit from high school, the bill was similar in most provisions to HB 5836 but would have allowed students who passed the state-administered proficiency examination to complete high school with an equivalent diploma prior to the end of their senior year. The bill would have provided for exit from high school in either the 10th, 11th or 12th grade, depending on the length of time required to master minimum competencies sufficient to pass the examination.

- 1977, Legislative Interim Activity:

A subcommittee of the house education committee on curriculum and testing for proficiency has been studying a discussion paper prepared by chairwoman, Gail Orcutt. Tentatively, the plan in the discussion paper calls for statewide testing in grades 4 & 8 and local district testing at grades 2, 6 & 10. High school graduation is not currently included in the plan. It is anticipated that legislation will be introduced in the 1978 session.

For more information contact:

Ms. Gail Orcutt
State Representative
State Capitol
Hartford, Connecticut 06115

- 1977, State Department of Education: (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

The state board of education has appointed a broad-ranged committee to study and make recommendations on the development of a high school equivalent competency-based certificate. Final recommendations of this committee to the state board include a proposal to use the General Educational Development (GED) test for anyone age 16 or older wishing to receive a high school diploma other than through the regular

CONNECTICUT - 1977, State Department of Education (continued):

high school graduation process. The committee also recommends that a secure form of the Adult Performance Level (APL) Survey also be given with the GED test.

The state board of education will consider this proposal at its June and July monthly meetings.

- Fall 1977, State Board of Education:

On November 2, 1977, the state board of education passed a resolution asking the state department of education to seek permission from the American Council on Education to administer the General Educational Development (GED) test to students ages 16 or older. The department of education expects to have a program in place for recent and potential dropouts by September of 1978. Rules and regulations along with training programs for guidance counselors are under development. The Adult Performance Level (APL) Survey will also be a part of the program.

For more information contact:

John Ryan
Connecticut Department of Education
State Office Building
P.O. Box 2219
Hartford, Connecticut 06115
(203) 566-4382

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DELAWARE - 1976-77, State Department of Education: (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

In December of 1976, the state board of education approved a resolution calling for the state department of education to develop a list of Level II competencies to be used as an additional requirement for high school graduation. The first draft of these performance indicators along with suggested implementation procedures was sent to local school districts in the spring of 1977. Local districts returned their comments and suggestions to the state department of education by June 1, 1977, with the state department of education revised plan due back before the state board in July. Local district reaction varied from postponing the deadline (program in place for the fall of 1981) for one year to developing a program assessing Level I competencies (reading, writing and mathematics) rather than Level II competencies (the application of Level I competencies).

A commercial testing agency has been awarded a contract to develop a baseline testing instrument to be given in the spring of 1978 to 11th graders.

To date, the statewide testing program, administered to grades 1, 4 and 8 has not been associated with the competency high school graduation requirement.

- Fall 1977, State Board of Education:

On September 15, 1977, the state board of education approved a new schedule for the performance-based project. In this version, districts will review their promotion

DELAWARE - Fall 1977, State Board of Education (continued):

policies for elementary pupils by May 1978, to make sure students pass to a higher grade only after they show competence in basic skills. Districts will review secondary promotion policies by May 1979. After these reviews, the state board will set performance levels in reading, writing, and arithmetic by July 1979, and the high school class of 1981 will be obliged to reach those levels to earn a diploma.

In the new policy the board also urges that reading be taught in all grades; obliges vo-tech schools to spell out competencies in vocational courses by June 1978; and calls for a statewide test of grade 11 by June 1978. The test will be modeled on the adult performance level test given previously, Dr. Broyles said, and will show how well students can apply their basic skills. Dr. Broyles said a committee will suggest criteria for local promotion policies, but districts are free to set their own levels. The promotion policies take effect in the school year that follows these completion dates.

For more information contact:

Dee Lafferty
Executive Director
Delaware School Boards Association
308 South State Street
Dover, Delaware 19901
(302) 678-2265

- Fall 1977, Governor's Commission:

In September of 1977, Governor Sherman W. Tribbitt appointed a commission on the future of education. The 28-member commission, chaired by Kenneth M. Smith, the governor's special assistant for education, is studying five areas of education:

1. Declining enrollments
2. The progress of competency-based education
3. Job skills
4. Those not served by education
5. School discipline

The final report of the commission will be issued in December of 1977.

For more information contact:

Fred Stern
Governor's Office
Legislative Hall
Dover, Delaware 19901
(302) 678-4101

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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA - Fall 1977, School District:

Since 1972 the public schools have been administering a criterion referenced test in reading and mathematics in grades 1-9. The California test bureau developed instrument is given on a pre- and post-test schedule in order to assist in the organization

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA - Fall 1977, School District (continued):

and planning for instruction. Work is now underway to correlate this test to a norm-referenced test to be administered in grades 3, 6 and 9. The primary thrust of this effort is to develop a competency-based curriculum. It is anticipated that 12th grade exit competencies will be addressed after the competency-based curriculum is in place.

William Spady, on leave from the National Institute for Education (NIE), is spending the school year assisting the district in the development of this program.

For more information contact:

Dr. James Guines
Assoc. Superintendent of Curriculum
and Instruction Services
(202) 724-4175

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FLORIDA - 1975, Legislation (Enacted): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

CSSB 340 of 1975 (F.S. 229.814) Provisionally lowers the age of compulsory school attendance from 16 to 14 years. The Act provides that any student who is at least 16 years old may be permitted to take a high school equivalency diploma examination; and that students who are at least 14 and have the approval of a parent or guardian also may be permitted to take the examination. Any student who attains satisfactory performance on the examination shall be awarded a high school equivalency diploma and shall be exempted from the compulsory school attendance requirements. NOTE: This law was amended in 1976 by Section IX of CSSB 107 (see below). This amendment removed age requirements and put the emphasis on reform of the total secondary school system and how students interface with their postsecondary education programs. Equivalency examinations are still included in the law.

- 1976, Legislation (Enacted): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

CSSB 107 of 1976 (Ch. 76.226) This is an extensive law modifying many sections of the existing code. Accountability, comprehensive planning by state departments of education and local districts, equivalency examinations, subject area examinations and grade-to-grade promotion are all affected. The sections which specifically apply to minimal competency testing are:

Section 1. Sets forth a short title, "The Educational Accountability Act of 1976," and legislative intent, which includes a requirement that the state system of public education give students at least the minimum skills necessary to function and survive in today's society.

Section 6. Substantially rewords the statute authorizing the statewide testing program to clarify legislative intent. The program will test students' basic skills in grades 3, 5, 8 and 11 and the data will be used to improve the state system of education by identifying needs and assessing how well districts and schools are meeting minimum standards -- how well education programs are equipping students with those minimum skills necessary to function and survive in today's society.

FLORIDA - 1976, Legislation (Enacted) (continued):

The commissioner of education is required to monitor the results of the statewide testing and provide technical assistance to those districts where deficiencies are identified.

Section 9. Amends F.S. 229.814, to provide for subject area examinations in addition to the high school equivalency examination which shall be made available to eligible students. The bill further amends this section to require school districts and community colleges to plan cooperatively to provide advanced instruction to students who demonstrate readiness for such activities.

Section 13. Amends F.S. 230.2311, (The Basic Skills Act) to provide that basic skills must be tied to performance and ability to survive in today's society -- "functional literacy."

Section 15. Required programs of pupil progression based upon performance by July 1, 1977 (designed to eliminate social promotion).

Such programs must be based upon local goals and objectives. More emphasis must be placed on performance in basic skills (on statewide tests) before students may progress from grades 3, 5, 8 and 11. Other factors for progression must be set by school board rule.

By the 1978-79 school year, there must be established district standards for high school graduation that are to include: (1) mastery of basic skills and satisfactory performance in functional literacy as designated by the state; and (2) completion of the minimum number of credits required by the district school board. Each district is required to provide remediation for students unable to meet such standards, and to provide for the awarding of differentiated diplomas to correspond with the varying achievement levels and competencies of graduates.

- 1976, Legislation (Failed): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

HB 2455 (died in committee) Would have repealed CSSB 340 of 1975.

HB 2659 At one time in the 1976 session, the bill was similar to an early version of SB 107 which passed as CSSB 107 (Ch. 76-223). See Legislation Enacted.

HB 2877 Functional literacy exam/11th grade. Requires 11th grade students to pass functional literacy examination in reading, writing and mathematics prior to high school graduation, with appropriate exams at the 5th grade and, for promotion to the next grade at the 3rd and 8th grades, beginning in September 1977. (Similar to HB 2659).

- 1977, Legislation (Failed):

HB 203 Would permit school districts to conduct dismissal hearings for instructional personnel for failure to teach students to reach state minimum performance standards.

SB 600 Same as HB 203.

CSSB 338 (similar to CSHB 1076 and 1095) Delays by two years, until 1980-81 school

FLORIDA - 1977, Legislation (Failed) (continued):

year, requirement that district school boards establish graduation standards with different kinds of diplomas.

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

Implementation of CSSB 107 of 1976 by the state department of education has taken a variety of directions. A quick summary looks like this:

Early Exit from High School This program using the General Educational Development (GED) tests went into use for school districts during the fall of 1977. The Florida Department of Education is using the GED test battery under a special arrangement with the American Council on Education. Since September 1977, 25 students have attempted the test. Information on number passing is not yet available.

Subject Area Examinations The department of education has assembled a list of "approved" norm referenced tests which districts may use or they have the option of using and developing their own subject area examinations. This program will be operable by January of 1978.

Pupil Progression The statewide basic skills test administered at grades 3, 5, 8 and 11 will serve as a screening device controlling passage to the next grade level. Each school district must develop its own pupil progression plan and file it with the department of education. This plan must show how they deal with the standards set by the state (remediation, etc.) and what steps the district will take for the grades not covered in the state assessment.

High School Graduation The first functional literacy test was administered to 11th graders in October of 1977. District level results will be released at the end of November 1977 and state level results in December of 1977.

For more information contact:

Ken Lowe
Director of Test Development
State Department of Education
Knott Building
Tallahassee, Florida 32303
(904) 488-8198

- 1977, Local Districts:

Duvall County, Jacksonville High school seniors for graduating class of 1977 took a one-hour test of functional literacy. In the fall of 1977 the district dropped the local testing program and will use only the statewide functional literacy test.

For more information contact:

Howard Winesett
Supervisor of Program and
Pupil Evaluation
(904) 633-5758

FLORIDA - Local District:

West Palm Beach The school board took action May 1976 requiring all high school juniors to take the APL high school level test. Beginning with the class of 1978 all students must pass this test as a requirement for obtaining a diploma. The district will continue to use the APL test in addition to the state mandated functional literacy test.

For more information contact:

Jerry Williams
Director of Program Evaluation
(305) 683-0050

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GEORGIA - 1977, State Department of Education: (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

Student Assessment As part of a long-range plan to fund local school districts through a program of comprehensive planning, the department of education is working with a number of new programs, one of which involves student assessment. Tests in reading, math, social studies and science for grades 4 and 8 have been administered for two years. The tests for grade 10 are nearing completion and the 12th grade exit test will be completed during the 1977-78 school year. In 1976 the state board of education called for a study to determine if the 4th grade reading test could be used for creating a standard for promotion to fifth grade. This study, being conducted by the Educational Testing Service, will most probably be reported to the state board of education during the summer of 1977.

High School Graduation In November of 1976, the state board of education adopted a resolution calling for a study to investigate the possibility of changing high school graduation requirements so as to include minimal proficiency standards for the life role skills, including specific recommendations for the student as the learner, the individual, the citizen, the consumer and the producer. The recommendations are modeled after the Oregon high school graduation requirements.

After a series of planning and invitational conferences, nine school districts have been selected by the state department of education to work on pilot aspects of restructuring the high school graduation requirements. The 1977 General Assembly appropriated $250,000 to assist with this process.

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

Nine school districts are participating as pilot schools in the study for restructuring high school graduation requirements. Included in the pilot effort is work on minimum exit test items, interest area competencies which may correspond to prior subtest area requirements and cover the range of competencies from minimum up. Also included in the pilot effort is developmental work on standards, competencies, indicators and implementation plans. Information gathered in this pilot effort will be used by the state board of education for policy decisions on minimal competency standards and other changes related to curriculum and guidance programs.

GEORGIA - Fall 1977, State Department of Education (continued):

For more information contact:

Ms. Debra Sharpe
Director of Competency-Based Education
Georgia Department of Education
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
(404) 656-2598

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HAWAII - Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

High School Graduation A graduation requirements task force is currently studying the need to change the requirements for graduation to include attainment of minimum competencies in eight foundation program areas. Final determination of the set of minimum competencies is to include public input through a survey questionnaire. A minimum competency test(s) is being contracted for development with a pilot test date of March 1978 so that board of education action can be recommended in Summer 1978 to affect incoming ninth graders in Fall 1978.

For more information contact:

Mildred S. Higashi
Administrator, Sciences and Humanities
Hawaii Department of Education
P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu, Hawaii 96804

- 1977, Legislation (Failed):

House Resolution 243 Called for the state department of education to conduct an in-house study on the feasibility of a statewide test for high school graduation.

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IDAHO - 1976, Legislation (Failed): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

SB 1390 This bill would have directed the state superintendent of public instruction to develop a testing program covering the basic skill areas. The test results were to be reported to the legislature.

- 1977, State Board of Education: (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

In February 1977, the Idaho state board of education adopted new graduation requirements and a district-option proficiency program that measures competency in reading, writing, arithmetic and spelling prior to high school graduation. Participating districts will be required to give the test beginning in the ninth grade and to provide remedial work for the students not passing the standards. Students will graduate with a diploma bearing the state board of education seal. Students who are not in participating districts will receive certificates of attendance or a plain diploma.

IDAHO - Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

The state department of education is developing a list of statewide objectives that will be taken out to the state for public opinion tests. Following this activity specifications will be written for selecting a commercial test or writing a test at the state level. Field testing of 9th grade items will begin in the Spring of 1978. The test will be available for use in the 9th grade in the 1978-79 school year. The state board of education plan calls for the graduating class of 1982 to be the first class to receive high school diplomas with the state seal.

For more information contact:

A. D. Luke
Assoc. State Superintendent
for Instruction
Idaho State Department of
Education
Boise, Idaho 83720
(208) 384-2165

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ILLINOIS - 1976, Legislation (Failed): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

SB 1574 Would require the state board of education to develop basic reading and writing proficiency tests and prescribe standards for persons seeking a high school diploma.

SB 1575 Would require the board of higher education to establish admission standards and require students to demonstrate their reading and writing proficiency prior to enrolling in a public college, university or community college.

- 1977, Legislation (Failed): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

HB 1364 Requires the successful passage of reading, writing and mathematics proficiency tests as a condition for high school graduation. (Places on interim study calendar.)

HB 486, HB 1745 and SB 238 All contained provisions for a competency testing program as a prerequisite for high school graduation. All bills are presumed dead in committee. It is anticipated that the sponsor of SB 238 will prepare a resolution calling for the Illinois Department of Public Instruction to make a study of the testing currently being conducted by Illinois school districts.

- Fall 1977, Interim Legislative Activity:

The Senate is conducting an interim study on minimal competency testing.

- Fall 1977, Local District:

Chicago The board of education has adopted a program creating a minimum competency testing program to begin with the class of 1979.

ILLINOIS - Fall 1977, Local District (continued):

Peoria The superintendent of schools has initiated a competency-based education program which calls for restructuring of all subject area curriculum guides so as to state minimum course objectives and tighten graduation requirements. School personnel, with community feedback, are now working on criterion referenced test items in language arts, reading and mathematics. A minimum testing program will be in effect for the class of 1980.

For more information contact:

Chester W. Dugger
Director of Secondary Education
3202 N. Wisconsin Avenue
Peoria, Illinois 61603
(309) 672-6791

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INDIANA - 1977, Legislative Action:

The Senate education committee conducted an interim study of the educational testing of school students and competency requirements for secondary school students. The committee did not recommend that legislation be written.

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

At a meeting of the Senate education interim committee in November, the state department of education released a tentative proposal calling for minimal competency testing in grades 3, 6, 8 and 10 in reading, science and mathematics.

For more information contact:

Harold H. Negley
Superintendent of Public Instruction
(317) 633-6610

- Fall 1977, Local District:

Gary Community School Corporation, Gary, Indiana The board of education in September 1974 approved a program requiring students to pass a competency test in reading, writing and arithmetic prior to graduation from high school. In the Fall of 1977 a test of oral communication was also added. Locally developed criterion-referenced tests were developed in reading and mathematics. Out of 2322 seniors due to graduate in 1977, the first graduation class affected, nine were denied their diploma because they had not passed one or both of these tests. In the Fall of 1976 every ninth, tenth and eleventh grader wrote a composition so that the schools could determine who needed remedial assistance. The writing proficiency requirement is due to be effective beginning with the class of 1978. The oral communication requirement, which is being field tested in the Fall of 1978, will not become effective until the class of 1980 graduates.

The Gary school district is beginning to gather evidence on the effectiveness of

INDIANA - Fall 1977, Local District (continued):

this program on students entering the apprenticeship program following high school graduation.

For more information contact:

Donald J. Henderson
Administrative Assistant,
Secondary Education
Gary Community School Corporation
625 East Tenth Place
Gary, Indiana 46403
(219) 886-6400

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IOWA - 1977, Legislation (Failed): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

SF 252 Would require all students to pass tests in reading, writing and mathematics in order to graduate. (Passed out of Senate education committee, placed on Senate calendar.)

House File 590 This omnibus bill contains sections on foreign language requirements, approval standards, district reorganization, gifted and talented pilot programs and a section on proficiency standards for high school graduation. (Passed out of the House education committee to the House calendar and then to the "Sifting Committee.")

- Fall 1977, Legislative Activity:

The joint interim study committee on school finance studied the issue of minimal competency testing but made no formal recommendation back to their respective education committees.

SF 252 (see above) is technically still alive and on the calendar of the Senate -- it could see action when the new legislative session begins.

For more information contact:

Iowa Association of School Boards
707 Savings and Loan Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50309
(515) 288-1991

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KANSAS - 1976, Legislation (Failed): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

SB 406 The measure would have required high school students to take a general examination as a requirement for graduation.

KANSAS - 1977, Legislation (Failed): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

HB 2139 Would require local boards of education to adopt standards and prescribe an examination for proficiency in basic educational skills including, but not limited to, "reading comprehension, writing and computation." After June 30, 1981, the state board of education will certify that high school graduates have met the state "basic educational skills" standards. Students not meeting the standards will be certified as having completed attendance in a four-year course of study.

Prior to July 1, 1978, the state board of education in cooperation with the state board of regents shall determine and establish "standards of proficiency in academic skills" (also a standardized examination) for students preparing for admission to state colleges and universities. (Note: House education committee conducted a one-day hearing on the bill but did not report it out of committee.)

SB 268 The state board of education would be required prior to July of 1978 to adopt standards of proficiency in the basic skills (reading comprehension, writing and computation) for graduation from high school. The state will prescribe the standardized examination and set the standards of proficiency, local boards will administer the test and certify to the state those students who have passed the test.

The proficiency examination will be administered twice each year with all students allowed to take the test each time it is administered. (Note: Bill died in committee.)

- Fall 1977, State Board of Education:

A task force appointed by the state board of education gave its final report and recommendations on minimal competency to the state board in November. The task force recommended:

1. That the state board adopt state standards of minimal competency through legislation with appropriate state funding.
2. Skill areas identified: reading, spelling and mathematics.
3. That the state board set competency standards, a uniform statewide criterion-referenced test and administer the test at each grade level K-8 yearly. Students in grades 9-12 would be tested only if they failed the test previously.
4. Local school boards would change policies and procedures in order to alter the learning program for remediation. It was recommended that the state pick up the cost of remediation.
5. The task force also recommended that failure of the test be recorded on the student transcript but that the high school diploma be awarded.
6. A program of inservice training was recommended to assist teachers in preparing for the program.

The board of education will take final action at a later date.

For more information contact:

Merle Bolton
Commissioner of Education
Kansas Department of Education
Topeka, Kansas 66612
(913) 296-3421

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KENTUCKY - 1977, State Department of Education: (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

In December of 1976 the state board of education instructed the state department of education to make a study of competency-based education and minimal competency testing for high school graduation and grade promotion.

A four-year plan of action was submitted to the state board of education and approved in the Spring of 1977. The plan calls for the development of criterion-referenced tests in reading, writing and arithmetic for grades 3, 5, 8 and 11. A series of statewide task force groups are now being appointed.

- Fall 1977, Executive Branch:

In the Spring of 1977 Governor Julian Carroll appointed a governor's task force on education. Three hundred sixty people including a steering committee of 40 reported their recommendations back to the governor in October of 1977. This task force recommended that a minimal competency testing program for high school graduation be enacted into law.

- Fall 1977, Legislative Activity:

The interim committee on education is studying the recommendations made by the governor's task force and may write legislation for the 1978 session.

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

The state department of education's four task force groups continue to work on recommendations for a criterion-referenced minimal competency test in writing, reading, and arithmetic. Sixty-four people have been working on this task force. A final report will be submitted to the board of education in February or March of 1978.

For more information contact:

Dr. Donald Van Fleet
State Department of Public Instruction
17th Floor Capitol Tower
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601
(502) 564-4394

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LOUISIANA - 1976, Legislation (Enacted): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

HB 810, Act 709 An accountability and assessment law contains a section requiring the establishment of reasonable minimum levels of pupil proficiency in the basic communication and computational skill areas and the administration of uniform system of criterion-referenced tests. High school graduation and grade promotion are not mentioned.

- 1977, State Department of Education: (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

After Act 709 was passed in 1976, the state department of education appointed a 100-person committee to study implementation procedures. This committee made

LOUISIANA - 1977, State Department of Education (continued):

recommendations to the joint legislative committee on education which resulted in the drafting of HB 275.

- 1977, Legislation (Enacted):

HB 275, Act 621 An educational accountability act includes a section on pupil proficiency:

A. The superintendent of education shall, by January 1, 1978, establish reasonable minimum levels of pupil proficiency in the basic communication and computational skills which shall be integrated into instructional programs. The superintendent of education shall, by January 1, 1979, develop and administer a uniform system of assessment based in part on criterion-referenced tests to determine pupil status, pupil progress, and the degree to which such minimum proficiency standards have been met. The grade levels involved in such assessment shall be chosen by the superintendent. The local school governing bodies shall cooperate with the superintendent and the state department of education in the administration of this section.

B. The school board of each district shall for the 1978-1979 school year and annually thereafter prepare a report of the aforementioned assessment results which shall include pupil assessment by grade and subject area for each school in the district, including those grade levels as established by the superintendent; and the board shall file such report with the superintendent of education.

C. The state superintendent of education shall make an annual report of the aforementioned assessment results. Such report shall include, but not be limited to, a report of the assessment results by grade and subject area for each school district of the state. The superintendent, by January 1, 1980, shall also include in such report an analysis and recommendations concerning the costs and differential effectiveness of instructional programs.

D. In addition, the state department of education shall prepare and submit an annual report to each school district in the state, and to the education committees of both houses of the legislature, containing an analysis, on a district-by-district basis, of the results and test scores of the testing program in the basic skills courses. The report shall include, but shall not be limited to, an analysis of the following operational factors having a substantive relationship to or bearing on such results:

(1) Average class size in grades one to three, inclusive;
(2) Pupil-teacher ratio in grades one to eight, inclusive;
(3) Average transitory factors as derived from dividing the average daily attendance of the district or selected schools by the total annual enrollment of the district;
(4) Compensatory education needs in each parish and city school system;
(5) Factors affecting the assessment results;
(6) Curriculum, textbooks and/or other teaching material as related to the grade or subject areas tested.

E. All test scores of individual students, average scores for individual classes or schools, and average scores for individual school systems shall be exempt from the Public Records Act (L.R.S. 44:1-7). School boards may choose to release test data if it does not identify individual students, classes, or teachers. All test

LOUISIANA - 1977, Legislation (Enacted) (continued):

scores or test averages released to the public, however, must be accompanied by a complete analysis of socioeconomic factors beyond the control of the school or school system which have an effect on student scores.

For more information contact:

Gary Reed
Louisiana State Department of Education
Division of Research and Development
P.O. Box 44064
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804

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MAINE - 1977, Legislation (Failed):

LD 734 Basic Attainment of Skills in Children Act would have local school districts be responsible for the establishment of basic skills and the incorporation of this element along with the successful completion of courses and teacher recommendations as a requirement for high school graduation.

The commissioner of education and cultural services is to prepare for such a program by conducting a series of statewide meetings to obtain a consensus of what Maine citizens feel "should be a partial condition for graduation from secondary school." Based on this consensus, the commissioner is to prepare a test to be administered during the senior year of high school. (Note: This bill was re-drafted during the legislative session and portions were included in LD 1810.)

- 1977, Legislation (Enacted):

LD 1810 An Act to establish an assessment of student performance in the basic skills. This bill calls for the state board of education and the commissioner of education to conduct a public survey and hearing for citizens to express their concern on this issue. To assist the commissioner a representative panel of citizens shall be appointed by the membership of each of the following organizations:

One member from each of the following organizations:
- State Board of Education
- Joint Standing Committee on Education
- The Maine Council on Education
- The Maine Secondary Principals Association
- The Maine Elementary Principals Association

Two members from the Maine Teachers Association, one elementary and one secondary

Four members of the public at large from rural and urban administrative units are to be selected by the speaker of the House of Representatives and the president of the Senate.

MAINE - 1977, Legislation (Enacted) (continued):

Using citizen opinion the commissioner is to prepare a test measuring basic skill performance levels in elementary and secondary schools.

Prior to January 1, 1978, an assessment of 11th grade basic skills is to be made in conjunction with the Maine assessment of educational progress program.

The commissioner is to prepare a report for the governor and legislature by February 1, 1978, on the above activities along with recommendations for state level policy action.

For more information contact:

Horace P. Maxcy, Jr.
Planning Specialist
State Department of Educational
and Cultural Services
State Office Building
Augusta, Maine 04333
(207) 289-3076

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MARYLAND - 1976, Legislation (Enacted): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

HB 1433 (M.A.C. Art. 77, Sec. 980) This new section requires the state board of education to prescribe progressively advanced minimum reading levels for grades 2 through 12; and, further provides that pupil may not enter grades 3 through eight until it has been determined that he has met the minimum level for the previous grade, with certain exemptions.

- 1976, Legislation (Failed): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

SJR 64 The proposal would have requested the state board of education to require a minimum level of proficiency in basic skill areas as a prerequisite to high school graduation.

- 1977, Legislation (Enacted): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

HB 1462 (Ch. 559) Effective July 1, 1977, this Act provides that:

"The State Board of Education shall prescribe for each grade two through twelve a minimum level of reading ability which shall progressively rise with each succeeding grade. If a local school board, based upon local assessment of student progress and in conjunction with the Maryland accountability assessment program, determines that a student, in grades (two through seven) THREE, SEVEN AND NINE THROUGH ELEVEN, has not met EITHER A MINIMUM GRADE LEVEL COMPETENCY OR the minimum reading level as prescribed by the State Board of Education for the previous grade, the student shall be either retained in the current grade or enrolled in an appropriate reading assistance program AS PART OF HIS OR HER INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM. These provisions may not be responsible solely for withholding grade advancement more than once in grades two through seven. (Pupils who are enrolled in special reading assistance

MARYLAND - 1977, Legislation (Enacted) (continued):

programs, or who are performing up to their reading capacity as determined by guidelines adopted by local school boards in accordance with State bylaws, or who have a physical or mental handicap which affects his or her ability to read, are exempt.) ALL STUDENTS EXCEPT THE MODERATE AND THE SEVERE AND PROFOUND INTELLECTUALLY LIMITED IN GRADES THREE, SEVEN, AND NINE THROUGH ELEVEN SHALL BE INCLUDED."

- 1977, State Department of Education: (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

In January of 1977, State Superintendent David W. Hornbeck presented a plan to the state board of education called "Project Basic." The plan approved by the board calls for the setting of new standards for minimal competencies in "five areas of human development" by 1982. These standards will apply to high school graduation.

At the present time, staff for "Project Basic" is being assembled and a promotional campaign explaining the program to citizens and school personnel is being carried out. The staff will be assigned the task of combining the state assessment program (survival reading test for grades 6, 9 and 12) and the implementation of newly enacted Ch. 559.

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

Project Basic activity includes the development of statements of competency and goals in five areas: (1) Basic skills -- reading, writing and mathematics, (2) world of work, (3) world of leisure, (4) citizenship and (5) survival. These statements will be taken to citizen and education groups in February and March of 1978 for their reaction. The time schedule calls for state board of education to approve minimum competency statements in the five areas by July of 1978.

The Maryland functional reading test will be ready for school district use in 1978-79 (9th grade) for the class of 1982. Mathematics and writing tests are to be developed next followed by the other four competency areas.

The department of education plans to prepare and copyright its five-year plan of action. The report -- Maryland's Comprehensive Plan for Competency-Based Education -- will be available in December of 1977.

For more information contact:

Floretta D. McKenzie
Assistant Deputy State Superintendent
P.O. Box 8717, BWI Airport
Baltimore, Maryland 21240
(301) 796-8300

- Fall 1977, Legislative Activity:

The House ways and means committee has conducted an interim study on minimum competency testing as a requirement for all grade levels.

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MASSACHUSETTS - 1977, Legislation (Pending and Failed): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

H 3284 The state board of education is to develop examinations for testing competency in the areas of mathematics, social studies, science, English/literature, language and business. The tests are to be reviewed each year and administered at the end of ninth, tenth and eleventh grades. The state board of education is to establish passing scores for each test and determine standards for a high school diploma issued by the state. (Note: dead in committee.)

Several other bills containing provisions for testing in the basic skill areas were introduced. Full text copies of these bills were not in hand as this report was prepared -- a more complete summary will be made in the next "Update." Status and bill numbers are:

H 4600 - dead
H 5658 - re-drafted into H 5949
H 5905 - (study), dead
H 822 - dead
H 2136 - re-drafted into H 5949
H 5949 - alive in House Ways and Means Committee

- 1977, State Department of Education: (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

The state department of education continues its study of high school competencies for the state board of education.

The policy committee in an interim report, June 1977, recommended to the state board of education that they consider mandating and testing student competencies in the areas of communication and computation. Several state level task force groups are working on details of this recommendation. The areas of career information, social responsibility, environment and culture are still under consideration.

The state department of education anticipates the final recommendations, including feedback from a series of statewide hearings, will be made in June of 1978.

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

The advisory committee on high school graduation requirements established in May of 1976 continues to work on procedures and policies for implementing a statewide competency standards program. Two reports have been given to the state board of education with final recommendations to be made in June of 1978. These recommendations are to reflect citizen and educator reaction and recommendations. During November and December of 1977 a series of statewide workshops was conducted to gather this input.

Tentatively the proposal calls for all public school students, by the time they graduate from high school, to demonstrate the attainment of certain essential competencies. "Essential competencies" are defined as the skills which individuals need to function effectively in most everyday social, economic and political situations. There are two components to these skills -- basic skills (reading, writing, speaking and computing) and life skills, the ability to use and apply basic skills in real life activities.

MASSACHUSETTS - Fall 1977, State Department of Education (continued):

Six "essential competency" areas have been identified: (1) Communication skills, (2) Mathematical skills, (3) Career information, (4) Social responsibility, (5) Environment (science, ecology) and (6) Culture (history, the arts). To date the committee has recommended standards in the first two areas.

Tentative implementation recommendation options call for testing to begin in grades 8 or 9 with local districts mandated to adopt the state requirements for high school graduation.

For more information on the proposed essential competency standards program contact:

Les May
Bureau of Research and Assessment
State Department of Education
31 St. James Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02116
(617) 727-8497

- 1977, Local District:

Boston Is working to develop a program of minimum competency. They are now developing objectives and criteria. The program is to apply to grades K-6. A parent handbook has been developed for distribution to all parents so they may assist their children and supplement their child's education. The thrust of the program is on remediation.

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MICHIGAN - 1976, Legislation (Failed): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

HB 6379 Competency examinations for basic high school curriculum would be required by this measure. Certificates would be granted.

SB 1608 A student would be prohibited from receiving a high school diploma unless a comprehensive examination were passed. The test would be prescribed by the state department of education and would reflect a level of reading proficiency appropriate for a high school graduate.

- 1977, Legislation (Pending):

SB 744 Students cannot graduate from high school unless competent in the basic skills areas. No mention is made of remediation for those failing.

- 1977, State Department of Education: (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

The Michigan educational assessment program tests minimal performance objectives in reading and mathematics at grades 4 and 7 with a recent addition of a test for grade 10. The results of the tests are reported on an individual, class, school district and state bases. Grade promotion is not the intended purpose of these tests. Also under consideration is a 10th grade basic skills test.

MICHIGAN - 1977, State Department of Education (continued):

The Michigan state board of education is considering the adoption of a 12th grade minimal competency test covering life role competencies in four areas: (a) personal, family and money, (b) civic and social responsibilities, (c) aesthetic and humanistic, and (d) employment.

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

The department of education in conjunction with 16 school districts is working on 10th grade life role competency objectives and test. The four life role areas being addressed are: (1) personal/family, (2) employment, (3) aesthetic, humanistic and leisure time and (4) civic/social.

For more information contact:

Ed Roeber
Supervisor, Michigan Assessment Program
State Department of Education
P.O. Box 30008
620 Michigan National Tower
Lansing, Michigan 48909
(517) 373-8393

- 1977, Local District:

Detroit The board of education has approved a plan calling for students to pass a basic and life skills test before graduation. This program will affect the class of 1979.

For more information contact:

Stu Rankin
Assistant Superintendent for Research
and Evaluation
Detroit Public Schools
(313) 494-1100

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MINNESOTA - 1977, Legislation (Carried over):

HF 44 Provides that the commissioner of education, prior to June 20, 1978, shall establish desirable minimum standards of reading achievement for pupils completing grades 3, 6, 9 and 12. The bill also makes an appropriation to the state department of education for the development and dissemination of tests and for teachers and consultants.

HF 118 Provides for a statewide program of assessment of minimal competency in reading, math, language arts and other general subject areas. It would also provide for a program of remedial aid for the 25 percent of the students who have the greatest need.

MINNESOTA - 1977, Legislation (Carried over) (continued):

HF 1641 Requires the state department of education to establish standards of minimal level competency in the basic skills for all students in elementary and secondary grades. It would also require statewide testing, pre and post, in grades K-12. School districts would have to develop a basic skills assistance program to take care of remediation. The bill would prohibit the tracking of students and would also mandate parent and community participation.

(NOTE: The three above house bills were assigned to the minimal standards subcommittee of the house education committee. An interim study by this subcommittee will be conducted during the Summer and Fall of 1977.

SF 862 This bill would permit students passing the General Educational Development (GED) test to be issued a competency certificate.

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

The minimum standards for secondary education task force established by the state board of education in 1975 continues its work on recommendations for a competency-based testing program in the basic skill areas. The task force has recommended that goal statements be drawn up in six areas: (1) basic skills, (2) personal development, (3) communication and culture, (4) survival studies, (5) mathematics, science and technology and (6) career and vocational. Seventeen goal statements for these six areas have been prepared for statewide reaction. An elaborate process involving statewide meetings, a questionnaire and a random telephone survey will be used. When this process is completed the state department of education will draw up minimum standards for eventual adoption into state regulations.

For more information contact:

Ray Peterson
Minnesota Department of Education
712 Capitol Square Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101
(612) 296-2414

- 1977, Local District:

The St. Paul open school, under the St. Paul Public Schools, requires students, prior to graduation, to demonstrate proficiency in the areas of: consumer awareness, cultural awareness, information finding, community involvement, personal skills and career awareness. Students are expected to use these skills in a practical experience application exercise.

For more information contact:

Joe Nathan
St. Paul Open School
St. Paul Public Schools
97 East Central Avenue
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101
(612) 224-9421

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MISSISSIPPI - 1977, Legislation (Failed): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

HB 952 Test students at various grade levels (died in committee).

SB 2295 Student achievement testing (died in committee).

SB 2423 Establish high school proficiency examination (died in committee).

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

A subcommittee of the state accreditation commission has completed a year-long study of high school graduation requirements as they relate to minimum competency testing. This report and recommendations will be sent to the full commission in November of 1977. The accreditation commission will send its recommendations to the state board of education later in the year.

For more information contact:

Dr. Ralph Brewer
Director, Division of Instruction
Mississippi Department of Education
Jackson, Mississippi 39205
(601) 354-6933

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MISSOURI - 1977, State Department of Education: (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

In 1976 the state board of education requested that the state department of education develop a test to measure the application of basic skills in the areas of reading, mathematics, and government/economics. In the spring of 1977 the department of education pilot-tested the Basic Education Skills Test (BEST) at grades 8, 10, 12 in 51 of the state's 450 school districts. The test consists of 13 objectives in each of the three subject areas with three test items per objective. The BEST instrument will be copyrighted by the department of education.

In the 1977-78 school year, local districts may voluntarily use the test in grades 8 and above. In the 1978-79 year, the test will be mandated for all eighth graders.

The state board has not established graduation or grade promotion standards for the test and is not expected to do so in the near future.

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

By November of 1977, 401 out of 456 school districts have elected to voluntarily test 8th graders during the 1977-78 school year. The test will be given in March and April 1978 to 60,000 plus 8th grade students. The state department of education plans several analytic reports following this preliminary test. All school districts are mandated to give the 8th grade test in 1978-79.

- Fall 1977, Interim Legislative Action:

The House interim committee on fiscal affairs has pre-filed a bill which would

MISSOURI - Fall 1977, Interim Legislative Action (continued):

require the state board of education to mandate minimum student performance standards in reading, writing and mathematics. (Note: Bill number not yet available.)

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MONTANA - Fall 1977, State Activity:

The Montana school boards association is contemplating a statewide study commission to study the implications of creating a statewide minimal competency testing program in the state. The association plans to involve representatives from a variety of state agencies and education groups.

For more information contact:

Leonard H. Sargent
Executive Director
Montana School Boards Association
501 Sanders
Helena, Montana 59601
(406) 442-2180

- Fall 1977, State Department of Public Instruction:

The department of public instruction is developing a position paper on competency-based testing.

For more information contact:

Dr. Bill Connett
Manager of Resources and Assessment
Office of Public Instruction
State Capitol
Helena, Montana 59601
(406) 449-3693

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NEBRASKA - 1977, State Department of Education: (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

Beginning in 1975 the state department of education has required local school districts to establish minimal performance levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Testing begins in the 5th grade and continues until mastery is achieved by each student in each skill area.

To assist school districts the department of education has developed the Nebraska Assessment Battery of Essential Learning Skills (N-ABELS). Districts using the test agree to use it for at least two years on a continuing basis in order to identify students needing remedial assistance. The test is not to be used for grade retention or promotion.

NEBRASKA - 1977, State Department of Education (continued):

The state department of education is currently contemplating a follow-up study on the use of this instrument.

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

A statewide assessment committee, the educational progress committee, is now completing a study on new directions for state assessment. The final report will be presented to the state board of education in December of 1978.

The department has also made some administrative and minor technical changes in the N-ABELS test.

For more information contact:

Hugh Harlan
School Management Division
Nebraska Department of Education
233 South 10th Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508
(402) 471-2444
or
David Abelow
Planning and Evaluation Division
Nebraska Department of Education
(402) 471-2486

- 1977, Local District:

Westside Community Schools, District 66, Omaha, Nebraska has a program requiring high school students to pass a test of minimum competency before graduating from high school. The program was in effect for the school year 1976-77. The locally developed test measures competencies in seven areas: (1) reading, (2) mathematics, (3) written communication, (4) oral communication, (5) consumerism, (6) the democratic process and (7) problem solving.

For more information contact:

James Findley
Assistant Principal
Westside High School
School District 66
Omaha, Nebraska 68114
(402) 391-1266

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NEVADA - 1977, Legislation (Enacted): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

AB 400 The state board of education is to prescribe a proficiency examination in reading, writing and mathematics which is to be administered at the end of grades 6, 9, and 12. Students may be promoted to the next grade if they fail on examinations

NEVADA - 1977, Legislation (Enacted) (continued):

but remedial work is to be provided. High school graduation is contingent upon passing the examination.

- 1977, Legislation (Failed): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

AB 293 Would require local school boards to administer competency examinations in reading, writing, computation, American history and American government at the end of grades, 3, 6, 9 and 12. Promotion to the next grade and high school graduation would be contingent on passing the examination.

AB 293 Would require public schools to give competency examinations in reading, writing, computation, American history and American government at the end of grades 6, 8, 10 and 12. Promotion to the next grade and high school graduation would be contingent on passing the examination.

AB 9 This bill would have the state board of education adopt and distribute to each school district maintaining a middle school, junior high school or high school minimum academic standards for graduation including performance indicators. The standards of proficiency shall include reading comprehension, writing and computation skills. Different standards of proficiency may be adopted for pupils with diagnosed learning disabilities. Local boards shall assess progress at least once during 7th and 8th grade and twice during tenth, twelfth grades. Parent conferences and remedial work must be provided.

SB 324 Periodic comprehensive examinations are to be given at the end of grades 3, 6, 9, 10, 11 and 12 in the subject matter areas of reading, writing, mathematics, American history, American government, basic economics and basic logic and reasoning. Failure of any examination would bring on remedial work or a repeat of the course or grade. Students would not be promoted to the next grade or graduate unless tests were passed. The state department of education is to prescribe the examination and standards.

SCR 14 Would have the legislative commission study the subject of pupil achievement in public schools. The study may include the following questions:

1. How pupil achievement in Nevada compares with that of other states;
2. Whether pupil achievement in Nevada is significantly lower today than in the past;
3. Whether school curriculum requirements throughout the state are sufficiently comprehensive and whether the standards are sufficiently rigid to ensure that pupils are adequately prepared for work or further education;
4. Whether there is need for the legislature to mandate certain basic curriculum standards;
5. Whether classroom discipline is a serious problem in Nevada schools and, if so, the extent to which it affects pupil achievement;
6. Whether there is a relationship between pupil achievement and pupil-teacher ratios, and whether in Nevada the ratios have reached a critical level.
7. What types of legislative action might be advisable if classroom discipline and pupil-teacher ratios are found to be adversely affecting pupil achievement;
8. Whether minimum competency standards for a high school diploma should be imposed, and if so, whether state-prescribed examinations should be used;

NEVADA - 1977, Legislation (Failed) (continued):

9. If competency examinations should be required, at what level or levels should they be given and what procedure should be followed for those who do not pass; and
10. If diplomas are granted only to pupils who meet minimum competency standards, whether other types of certificates, such as certificates of attendance, should be given to those who do not meet the standards.

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

In order to implement AB 400 the state department of education has reformed an ad hoc committee to make recommendations to the state board. In April of 1978 the Stanford achievement test will be administered by local districts to students in grades 3 and 6. This test was selected because of the short amount of time the districts had to initiate a testing program. The state department expects to issue an RFP for a new test in the summer of 1978. Testing in the 9th grade will begin in the 1978-79 school year and grade 12 in the 1981-82 school year.

For more information contact:

Dr. Hal Mathers
Nevada Department of Public Instruction
Carson City, Nevada 89701
(702) 882-7184

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NEW HAMPSHIRE - 1977, Legislation (Failed): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

Seven legislative bills related to minimal competency testing and high school graduation were introduced in the 1977 session. All were killed or sent to the House education committee for interim study. Further information on these bills will be provided in the next "Update."

- 1977, State Department of Education: (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

Dr. Robert Brunnelle, commissioner of education, has appointed a committee to establish competency guidelines for local school districts to use in assessing student competencies in the communications and mathematics skill areas. The first draft of the competency guidelines for grade 4 have been sent to local districts for reaction. It is expected that the 4th grade guidelines will be ready for pilot consideration in the fall of 1977. The guidelines for grades 8 and 12 are under development.

- 1977, Legislative Activity (Failed and carried over):

HB 413 Establishing a standard for high school graduates. Status: carried over to interim study.

HB 482 Relative to the high school equivalency examination and school attendance. Status: dead.

NEW HAMPSHIRE - 1977, Legislative Activity (Failed and carried over) (continued):

HB 818 Requiring high school students to pass a standard examination in order to graduate. Status: dead.

HB 977 Authorizing school boards to release graduating high school seniors early. Status: dead.

SB 108 Requiring the state board of education to establish statewide educational standards which must be met before a student may be passed to the next higher grade. Status: dead.

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

The state department of education continues to work on the 4th and 8th grade competency guidelines. Some of the material will be pilot tested in the spring of 1978. Additional pilot testing will be completed in the 1978-79 school year.

For additional information contact:

Neal Andrew
Deputy Commissioner of Education
New Hampshire State Department of Education
State House
Concord, New Hampshire 03301
(603) 271-3144

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NEW JERSEY - 1976, Legislation (Enacted): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

A 1736, Ch. 97 This bill calls for the state to set minimum reading and mathematics standards and for local districts to provide remedial work. As amended and signed by the governor, local districts have the right to set "interim goals" lower than the state goals and to determine whether students are making progress towards these goals. If progress is not evident districts must come up with a variety of solutions, one of which could be remedial work. These "improvement" plans may combine remediation together with diagnosis of students, study of a district's basic curriculum and parent involvement.

- 1977, State Department of Education: (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

In the 1976-77 school year, the New Jersey department of education administered the educational assessment program in the basic skills. This instrument, administered in October of 1976, used the 65% mastery level cut-off score for identifying students needing instructional assistance. Since the number of students identified was quite large, the bottom 20% were judged to be in need of immediate instructional assistance.

Since January of 1977, ten statewide committees have been working on a minimum basic skills test for grades 3, 6, 9 and 11. This test will take the place of the instrument used in the 1976-77 school year. In the spring of 1977, the committees have surveyed various groups (teachers, administrators, board members, students

NEW JERSEY - 1977, State Department of Education (continued):

and citizens) to build a list of minimal skills. The Educational Testing Service is under contract to develop an instrument which will be field tested in the fall of 1977.

- 1977, Legislation (Pending):

AB 2352 The graduation requirements bill is still in committee. It would require the state board of education to prepare a competency test for high school seniors to be taken in their senior year before graduation. The test would cover the basic high school curriculum and the basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

The department has a high school graduation study commission working the problem of combining basic skill competencies and course requirements.

For more information contact:

Dr. William Mathis
Director, Educational Research
State Department of Education
225 West State Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08625
(609) 292-5180

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NEW MEXICO - 1977, State Department of Education: (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

Early in 1976, the state superintendent of public instruction appointed a task force to study the basic skills. In the spring of 1977, the state board of education approved the New Mexico basic skills plan. This plan calls for local school districts to conduct minimal competency testing at two different checkpoints in a student's school career:

"The first of these is an early assessment to be conducted according to a local district plan. A second checkpoint is a 10th grade proficiency test battery which will be mandated for the fall of 1978 in which the graduating class of 1981 will receive a proficiency endorsement on their high school record if they have successfully passed the test battery."

This proficiency battery will consist of a version of the Adult Performance Level (APL) test and a writing sample. This test battery was pilot tested on a sample basis in the spring of 1977 with statewide field testing scheduled for the fall of 1977. Standards have not yet been established for the cut-off scores on the battery.

The state department of education is also working on a series of curriculum guides for the basic skill areas.

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

Statewide field testing of the APL test and writing sample is scheduled for spring

NEW MEXICO - Fall 1977, State Department of Education (continued):

of 1978. At the completion the writing sample-tied test a complete review of the entire program is scheduled. Decisions on standards will grow out of and follow this review.

For more information contact:

John Blanchet-Ruth
New Mexico Department of Education
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87503
(505) 827-2928

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NEW YORK - 1976, State Board of Education: (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

The board of regents, on May 26, 1976, approved a resolution establishing the passing of basic competency tests in reading and mathematics as a requirement for issuance of a high school diploma, beginning with the graduating class of June 1979. These basic competency tests are criterion-referenced tests designed to measure basic adult skills necessary to function in an adult society. They were pilot tested in 1975 and used on a regular basis in the 1976-77 school year. The tests are first given in the ninth grade and provide a basis for remediation prior to high school graduation. Currently the minimum competency cut-off point is defined as 65% of all items correct on both the mathematics and reading test.

The board of regents has given approval for incorporating three additional tests into the graduation requirements effective in June 1980. The three additional tests would be in the areas of (1) civics and citizenship, (2) practical science, health and drug education, and (3) writing and language skills.

The New York State Department of Education also administers the regents diploma program and the pupil evaluation program (PEP), both of which are related to evaluating student performance in the basic skill areas.

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

The board of regents will consider an additional mandate for testing in the areas of writing, civics/citizenship, and health/science at a meeting in late November of 1977.

For more information contact:

Dr. Polley
Acting Deputy Commissioner for
Elementary and Secondary Education
State Education Department
Albany, New York 12224

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NORTH CAROLINA - 1977, Legislation (Failed):

S 80 Would require all students to pass a minimal competency test in reading, writing and mathematics before graduating from high school.

S 81 Would require the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 6th and 9th grade students to take a statewide standardized test measuring their progress in learning the basic skills.

- 1977, Legislation (Enacted):

HB 204 Requires the state board of education to adopt a test, graduation standards and policies and procedures for implementing a program assuring that public and nonpublic high school students "possess those skills and that knowledge necessary to function independently and successfully in assuming the responsibilities of citizenship."

The governor is to appoint a competency test commission which is to make recommendations to the state board of education by January 1, 1978 on tests and skills to be measured.

HB 205 Similar to HB 204 but would create a minimum competency testing program in grades 1, 2, 3, 6, 9 and 11. In grades 1 and 2 a criterion-referenced test is to be used, and grades 3, 6, 9 and 11, a norm-referenced instrument is to be used. A separate competency test commission has been appointed to make recommendations and collect public opinion.

For more information contact:

Betty Moore
State Department of Public Instruction
Room 222 Education Building
Raleigh, North Carolina 27611
(919) 733-3512

- 1977, Local Districts:

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board approved the following resolution in March 1977:

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING COMPETENCY EXAMINATIONS AS A GRADUATION REQUIREMENT

1. That the competency testing program be developed in reading and computation skills.
2. That the field testing be conducted this spring and that the data be collected for analysis by the pupil assessment director.
3. That a planned individualized program be developed for those students who are unable to pass the examination. Such a program would include psychological testing, counseling, individual evaluation, and remedial courses related to areas of deficiency.
4. That extensive work in other skill areas be built into the junior high school curriculum.
5. That the reading management system which has been instituted for the elementary grades be fully utilized to monitor the skill development of each student.

NORTH CAROLINA - 1977, Local Districts (continued):

The data from the management system would serve as a guide for planning instruction in skill development.

6. That the Board seek to have the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Plan considered in the development of the statewide plan now under study in the State Legislature and seek to have local representatives appointed to the Competency Test Commission which would function at the state level.

7. That the relationship of the competency examination to the high school diploma not be determined until the field testing data is available and the state Competency Test Commission has made its recommendations. A status report on field testing will be made no later than September 1, 1977.

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NORTH DAKOTA - 1977, Legislation (Failed): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

H 1460 This bill would have prescribed standards for the high school diploma and would allow diplomas to indicate the completion of an optional proficiency test.

H 1429 Title: A bill to provide accountability for quality education. This bill included rules and regulations for high school diplomas and would have established minimum education skills in mathematics and communications along with a uniform test to measure these skills.

H 1027 Title: A bill to provide for educational management information with educational accountability capabilities.

- Fall 1977, No New Activity Reported.

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OHIO - 1977, Legislation (Pending):

HB 6 This bill would have the state board of education develop a comprehensive achievement examination to be administered to all pupils in grades 3, 6, 9 and 11 as a prerequisite for promotion to the next grade level. The grade 11 requirement is to be met before a student can graduate from high school.

Note: Hearings on this bill were expected to be held in the summer of 1977. A substitute bill has been drafted. In November of 1977 the bill was still technically alive in subcommittee.

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

The state board of education has, after listening to a presentation of three alternative models (state, state/local and local) developed by a state superintendent of public instruction-appointed task force consisting of state education agency staff members, has given permission to the Ohio Department of Education to proceed with a series of meetings with representatives of the major education groups, local educators, and community.

OHIO - Fall 1977, State Department of Education (continued):

Information gathered at those meetings will be used to determine standards, grade levels, intervention strategies, and types of exams.

For more information contact:

James Williams
Consultant, Division of Planning
and Evaluation
Ohio Department of Education
65 S. Front Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 466-4838

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OKLAHOMA - 1977, State Board of Education: (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

In the spring of 1977, the Oklahoma education council's committee on basic skills and minimal competency testing presented the following recommendations to the state board of education. They were adopted by the board in April of 1977:

1. That the Oklahoma education council request the state department of education determine what Oklahoma school districts are presently doing to increase reading readiness and reading skills in K-3 and to report its findings to the council.

2. That the council request the state department of education to encourage school districts to strive for small class groups and longer time periods during the school day for teaching basic skills.

3. That the council request that the state department of education gather data through testing in the basic learning area of reading. (Many groups and individuals have expressed interest in knowing the achievement levels of students in Oklahoma's public schools. Minimum competency testing has been widely discussed, but there is lack of adequate data on which to reach understanding or to make decisions. Information on how Oklahoma is doing in this critical area will then be provided to the Oklahoma Education Council together with recommendations for further action.).

4. That the council request that the state department of education in its long-range study of certification give special attention to the area of preparation for teaching reading skills at both the elementary and secondary levels.

5. That the Oklahoma education council request that the state department of education encourage local school districts to limit the time lost from basic classes because of school activities.

The state department of education has proceeded with recommendation number three. In the fall of 1977, a standardized test will be given to 15,000 students on a random sample basis in grades 3, 6, 9 and 12. The test will measure the basic skills in grades 3, 6 and 9 and survival skills in grade 12.

OKLAHOMA - Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

The state department of education is conducting a study of certification requirements and the preparation of teachers which is related to recommendation four of the Oklahoma Education Council.

For more information contact:

Dr. Milt Lehr
Oklahoma Education Council
Room 4-K
State Capitol
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105
(405) 521-2193

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OREGON - 1976, State Board of Education: (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

The state board established new graduation requirements in 1972 with local distircts required to file implementation plans by July of 1974 for the class of 1978. New requirements were based on credits for courses, attendance and required competencies in personal, social and career areas. Districts are to develop their own performance indicators.

Revisions in 1976 still require districts to adopt competency statements and performance indicators in all areas by 1978. By then, however, districts must verify that students have minimal competencies covering only the basic skills ("read, listen, analyze, speak, write and compute, using the basic processes") in order to receive a high school diploma. Schools will not be responsible for certifying whether students have attained other competencies until the graduating class of 1981. In other words, instead of assessing goals in all program areas (e.g. language arts, health education, business education), districts will assess the reading, writing and computing skills in three programs of their choice beginning with the class of 1978. Assessments in additional areas as identified by local districts will be due by 1981. Personal development, social responsibility and career development were originally mandated as headings for the additional competency areas, but the 1976 revisions now allow districts to choose to use these headings, or to develop their own replacement areas for them. The revisions also eliminate a clinically worded section on diagnosis and prescription, but retain the concept as an option for districts.

The plan also requires elementary schools to establish programs that offer student opportunities to acquire skills and knowledge applicable to the competencies required for graduation.

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

No new activity at state level. School districts continue to carry responsibility for implementation of minimal competency testing and standards. Class of 1978 will be the first group of students to have moved through high school under new program.

- 1977, Local District: (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

Parkrose School District, Portland Reports minimal competency activity.

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PENNSYLVANIA - 1976, Legislation (Failed):

HB 770 (died in committee - A 475-page proposed school code revision). The measure would require each school district to determine whether or not its students have developed minimal competencies within mandated courses (academic skills) and to measure student ability to cope with certain specified problems encountered by adults (survival skills). It would obligate the state department of education to develop a procedure to assess student performance in the academic skills learned through mandated programs and to report annually to the legislature regarding the degree of academic and survival skills attained by students at various grade levels together and to make recommendations for improving the educational program. It further provides that, four years after HB 770 becomes law, a written statement certifying which competencies have been attained by each student must become part of the student's permanent record.

- 1977, Legislation (Pending):

HB 669 This bill is similar to HB 770 which failed in 1976. It contains the same section on minimal competencies and includes approximately 35 changes in other sections of the code from the 1976 version.

- 1976, State Board of Education:

The state board of education adopted a position paper (Jan. 1976) on community learning that directs the secretary of education to put before the state board of education within 12 months a plan for public education that defines curriculum in terms of competencies students should be acquiring at various grade levels, rather than in terms of courses and credits, and that marshals the human and physical resources of the entire community in the development of such competencies. State department of education officials are working with communities to establish competencies. Project 81 is the title given to the effort.

The Project 81 plan was adopted by the board of education in November of 1976. A baseline testing instrument will be administered in the fall of 1977. Work continues on complete definition of competencies, grades K-12.

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

The department of education has given top priority for the next five years to Project 81. The goals of this endeavor are: "... to define the skills, knowledge and abilities young people need to cope with the demands of adult life; to include people from the community as active participants in the educational system; and to make sure students are actually prepared for the world beyond graduation."

In order to reach these goals, 12 school sites have been selected as models for Project 81. By November 30 of 1977 these 12 districts will have prepared and submitted competency statements. These will receive statewide review and be ready for adoption by February of 1978. Following this activity the 12 school sites will look at graduation requirements and submit plans they would like to test between 1978 and 1981.

PENNSYLVANIA - Fall 1977, State Department of Education (continued):

For more information contact:

Judy Bauer Zaenglein
Project 81 Director
Pennsylvania Department of Education
Box 911
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17126
(717) 783-5005

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RHODE ISLAND - 1977, State Department of Education: (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

In 1974, the Rhode Island department of education developed a master plan for evaluation designed to determine how well the state educational system performs with respect to critical educational aims, and what major changes need to be instituted to effect improvement in that performance. The objectives of the master plan which relate most directly to interest in competency-based exiting requirements are:

1. Formulating State Objectives
To specify high-priority statewide educational objectives in measurable terms for approval by the board of regents.

2. Assessing Achievement of State Objectives
To identify and compare alternative strategies for determining the extent to which statewide educational objectives are being achieved.

By 1975, major activities had been initiated under Objectives 1 and 2, and these included:

Definition of "Life Skills" and Related Performance Indicators, a publication by the Rhode Island Department of Education.

Three cognitive skills were identified as high-priority learning outcomes for Rhode Island students: comprehension, analysis and evaluation. Since minimal competency in the exercise of the three "life skills" can be demonstrated in an infinite variety of ways, a reasonable subset of 75 performance indicators was identified by the Rhode Island Department of Education. These indicators were keyed to the regents' educational goals for education, but were developed to indicate competency in the underlying three skills and to be content independent.

These performance indicators were compiled and circulated throughout the state for public reaction in a booklet, Schools and Skills.

Construction of test items related to the life skills and performance indicators began in 1975 and approximately 600 items were produced. The majority of items are multiple-choice, paper-pencil format. However, open-ended items, items using audio-visual materials, and items necessitating oral responses were also developed.

A sample of the total pool of items was pilot-tested in Rhode Island schools in the spring of 1977. Results will be reported and analyzed in June 1977.

RHODE ISLAND - 1977, State Department of Education (continued):

Pilot of Statewide Assessment Program

In 1975-76, the statewide assessment pilot project used both norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests for different age groups to measure the achievement of basic skills.

The norm-referenced test was the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, administered to a sample of students in grades 4 and 8. The criterion-referenced test used was a specially developed test of skills based on objectives and test items developed by the National Assessment of Educational Progress and the adult performance level study. This test was administered to a sample of 17-year-old students. Depending on the results of the pilot test, Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) items will eventually be incorporated into the criterion-referenced component of the statewide assessment program.

Work on the criterion-referenced component of the statewide assessment program has generated interest in studying the advisability of moving into competency-based diplomas. The spring 1977 pilot test of RIDE developed indicators and items was designed to yield information on the adequacy of the indicators and items as measures of the state objectives and "life skills." In addition to test results and data analysis, Jason Milman of Cornell University has been engaged as a consultant to critique the indicators and items and to comment on the feasibility of using the indicators beyong statewide assessment, e.g., as a basis for competency-based high school graduation requirements.

- Fall 1977, State Board of Education:

The department of education has prepared a draft policy statement on competency-based diplomas which was presented to the state board of regents in November of 1977. Briefly, the policy statement proposed:

(1) A dual approach to defining high school competencies -- statewide tests and local district initiative.
(2) The competency testing program should begin early so as to permit remediation.
(3) The department of education would give technical assistance to local districts. Public hearings would be held.
(4) Standards would be set by the state and local districts.
(5) The statewide test would be taken from available RIDE items.

The plan calls for a period of public review through the spring of 1978 followed by formal adoption and the development of rules and regulations.

For more information contact:

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Providence, Rhode Island 02908
(401) 277-3126

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SOUTH CAROLINA - 1977, Legislation (Pending): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

H 2053 Would establish a minimum achievement-level testing program for public school pupils administered by the state board of education. It would require pupils to annually meet prescribed program standards for grade promotion and provide summer school remedial procedures for pupils who fail to meet them. For the 1977-78 school year the testing program is to be instituted only for the first grade with movement up to the next grade the following year until all twelve grades are included. (Assigned to the education committee to be carried over to the next session.) Note: Provision was made in the general appropriation's bill to create a 15-person task force to study this issue.

- 1977, State Board of Education: (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

The standing committee on textbooks and instructional materials of the state board of education is studying the issue of minimal competency testing.

- 1977, Interim Legislative Action:

The task force to study minimal competency in the basic skills was created by the following provision in the budget bill:

"The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Lieutenant Governor shall each appoint four members of their respective houses to a Special Joint Education Committee to Study Minimal Competency in Basic Skills. In addition to the legislative members provided for above, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Lieutenant Governor, or their designees, shall be members of the committee. The committee shall appoint nine nonlegislative members to provide public input and educational expertise to the committee. The committee shall conduct a study on matters relating to minimal competency in basic skills and report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly as soon as practicable. Members of the committee shall receive such mileage, per diem and subsistence as provided by law for state boards, committees and commissions. Expenditures for the committee shall not exceed thirty-five hundred dollars. Upon filing of its report to the General Assembly, the committee shall terminate."

Under the chairmanship of Lt. Governor Brantley Harvey, the task force expects to complete its work and have a draft of a bill available by December of 1977.

For more information contact:

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General Assembly, Legislative Council
P.O. Box 11417
Columbia, South Carolina 29211
(803) 758-2334

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SOUTH DAKOTA - 1977, Legislative Interim Activity:

The interim committee on taxation held hearings and conducted a study of minimal competency testing during the fall of 1977.

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TENNESSEE - 1977, Legislation (Failed): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

H 643 The fundamental education act of 1977 placed emphasis on the teaching of language arts and mathematics in the elementary grades (died in committee).

S 405 Similar to H 643 (withdrawn).

H 960 and S 1240 The full text of these bills was not available as this report was prepared. A more complete summary will appear in the next "Update."

- 1977, State Department of Education:

The commissioner of education at the request of the state board of education appointed a task force to study high school graduation requirements. As a result of the work of this committee a proficiency examination was given (pilot basis) to high school seniors in 27 schools in the spring of 1977.

The task force is expected to continue its work when the results of this test are available.

- Fall 1977, State Board of Education:

In early November of 1977 the state board of education approved a program mandating that the high school diploma be awarded to students passing a basic skills proficiency test. The program will be in effect for the graduating class of 1982. The high school graduation test will be first given to juniors in 1981 and will consist of reading, mathematics, grammar and spelling written at approximately the 6th-8th grade achievement level. The test will be similar to the Denver PAR test which was piloted in the state in 1977.

It also recommended that preliminary tests be given once in grades 4, 5, or 6 and once in grade 8. Local districts would hold responsibility for those tests while the state would be responsible for the graduation test. However, in the interim before 1981, the 8th grade test will be handled by the state.

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132 Cordell Hull Building
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(615) 741-7816

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TEXAS - 1977, Legislation (Failed): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

HB 312 A bill dealing with proficiency testing was introduced but did not get a hearing with the House education committee. More information on this bill will be included in the next "Update."

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

The Texas assessment project is working on high school completion objectives for

TEXAS - Fall 1977, State Department of Education (continued):

essential reading and mathematics skills. There are no statewide mandates for minimum competency.

- Fall 1977, Local Districts:

Seven urban school districts have formed an urban compact to develop measures of essential reading and mathematics. The school districts are: Austin, Houston, Dallas, Forth Worth, El Paso, San Antonio and Corpus Christi.

For more information contact:

Keith Cruse
Director, Division of Educational Assessment
Texas State Education Agency
(512) 475-2066

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UTAH - 1977, State Board of Education:

In January of 1977 the state board of education approved changes in the high school graduation requirements mandating local distircts to measure basic competencies before students could graduate from high school. Local districts can select the test instrument and establish the cut-off standards. The skill areas to be assessed are: reading, writing, speaking, listening, arithmetic, democratic governance, consumerism and problem solving. The requirement is in effect for the graduating class of 1980.

For more information contact:

Dr. Lerue Winget
Associate Superintendent
State Board of Education
136 East South Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111
(801) 533-5431

- 1977, Local District:

Jordan School District Is working on a goal-based education management system aimed at using criterion-referenced tests to assist with curricular revision. Minimum exit standards for graduation are under study.

For more information contact:

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Sandy, Utah 84070
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VERMONT - 1976, State Board of Education: (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

The Vermont board of education, at its meeting on July 20, 1976, accepted a set of basic competencies in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and mathematics while deferring action on competencies in reasoning for further development. The board also stipulated that by 1981 mastery of all of the basic competencies is to be one requirement for graduation from high school, unless the pupil has a limiting handicap and completes an approved, comprehensive, multi-year plan.

A pupil progress record on which the mastery of the basic competencies is recorded will be maintained for each Vermont pupil. Superintendents will report information concerning pupil achievement of the basic competencies to the commissioner of education with their annual statistical reports each August beginning in 1978. The information required in this report will vary from year to year.

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

School districts are now working on local procedures and policy for reporting pupil progress in the basic competency areas. The state board did not mandate how districts were to reach this goal. Testing may or may not be used depending on local decisions.

The recommendation for the competency area of reading will be presented to the state board of education in December of 1977. If approved, school districts would have to certify this competency for the graduating class of 1982.

For more information contact:

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Vermont Department of Education
Montpelier, Vermont 05602
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VIRGINIA - 1976, Legislation (Enacted): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

HB 256 (Standard of Quality Act) The constitution of Virginia calls for the state board of education to prescribe standards of quality for the several school divisions subject to revision by the General Assembly. One of the goals of education in Virginia is to aid students, consistent with their abilities, to become competent in the fundamental academic skills. Each school division is to give highest instructional priority to developing the reading, communications and mathematics skills of all students with particular attention to the primary grades (1-3) and the intermediate grades (4-6). Remedial work for low-achieving students shall begin upon identification of student need.

By September of 1978, the state board of education, in cooperation with local districts, shall establish specific minimum statewide educational objectives and a uniform statewide test in reading, communications and mathematics skills. The test is to measure yearly progress for individual students. The Act also sets standards

VIRGINIA - 1976, Legislation (Enacted) (continued):

for career preparation, special education, gifted and talented students, personnel, teacher preparation, testing and measurement, accreditations, planning, public involvement and district policy manuals.

- 1977, State Board of Education:

In the spring of 1977 the state board of education approved a resolution calling for a minimal competency testing program as a requirement for high school graduation beginning with the class of 1981. The board resolution reads:

"A student shall be eligible to graduate from the accredited secondary school last attended during the regular school term upon successful completion of the graduation requirements set forth in these standards. Students completing graduation requirements in an accredited summer school shall be eligible to graduate from the school previously attended during the regular school term when the summer school credits are earned in compliance with summer school regulations set forth in these standards.

In order to graduate from an accredited secondary school and receive a high school diploma in Virginia, students shall earn the number of units of credit prescribed by the Board of Education and be able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of local school officials attainment of the following minimum competencies:

1. Functional literacy in communicative skills including the ability to read, write and speak;
2. Computational skills including the ability to work with decimals and percentages to the extent that they can effectively participate in society as consumers;
3. A basic knowledge and understanding of the history and cultures of the United States, including concepts and processes of democratic governance and our economic system;
4. The ability to pursue higher education in postsecondary schools or gain employment as a result of having gained a job-entry skill."

For more information contact:

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Richmond, Virginia 23116
(804) 786-3893

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WASHINGTON - 1976, Legislation (Enacted): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

SB 3026 Requires that school districts, with community participation, will develop learning objectives for grades kindergarten through eight. The state department has interpreted that these objectives will be stated in behavioral terms and that the objectives will be measured for actual student attainment at least annually. Compliance with the law will be monitored through the program approval process for the allocation of state funds.

HB 1345, 1976 Requires that all fourth grade students be given a standardized

WASHINGTON - 1976, Legislation (Enacted) (continued):

achievement test in the reading, mathematics and language arts. This test was just administered in October 1976 with the results to be used by school districts and parents to compare their children's achievement level with those of other pupils in the district, the state and the nation. The law also provided that a sample of 2,000 students at the eighth and eleventh grades be tested for the same purpose. The school districts are encouraged to establish a separate test for the second grade for the early identification of pupils needing assistance in language and computational skills.

- 1977, Legislation (Pending): (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

Senate Substitute 2886 and Engrossed Substitute House Bill 960 both finance bills, have the potential of creating an operational and financial definition of basic education for Washington school districts. On June 1 the bills were in conference committee awaiting final legislative action.

One of the bills, ESHB 960, sets forth three criteria for measuring basic education: 1) It would define literacy as knowledge of those skills necessary to learning. 2) It would define the curriculum by program hours; i.e., in grades 4-6, it would require 2,835 hours of instruction with 90 percent of them in basic skills including reading/language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, music, arts and physical education; five percent would be in work skills such as home and family life, shop, business and office education and another five percent would be left up to district discretion. 3) It would allocate the money based on a ratio of students to staff with full financing on the state level by Sept. 1, 1979. The bill does not specify a student/staff ratio but would allow this item to be included in the budget bill each biennium.

Of special interest in Washington is a court case, Seattle School District #1 v. State of Washington, in which Judge Doran, in a lower court decision, ruled that special levies could no longer be used to fund an "ample basic education." Reasoning that the legislature had not provided enough money to fund an ample basic education, he declared that special excess levies for basic education were unconstitutional. However, he clearly pointed out that such levies would be constitutional if they were used to support enrichment programs.

An important point that has been missed is the declaration that education is a constitutionally guaranteed right. Judge Doran concluded, "Article IX, Section I, ... is a substantive provision imposing the paramount duty upon the state and creating, by implication, a correlative right of equal stature for the children of the state..." (Emphasis supplied.)

Although this is not a state supreme court decision, it appears that, if the decision is upheld, the future of Washington school finance will hinge on the definition of an "ample basic education."

- Fall 1977, Legislative Interim Activity:

The House and Senate interim legislative committees conducted studies of minimal competency testing during the fall of 1977.

WASHINGTON - Fall 1977, Legislative Interim Activity (continued):

For more information contact:

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Research Analyst, Senate
Education Committee
Legislative Building
Olympia, Washington 98504
(206) 753-1556

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WEST VIRGINIA - 1977, State Department of Education: (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

No formal action has been taken by the state board of education or the state department of education. The department of education is giving technical assistance for curricular changes and the identification of "essential competencies" in the various subject areas.

- Fall 1977, State Department of Education:

The department of education is working on a process to establish competency statements (expected learner outcomes) in each subject area, grades K-12. These statements will be tied to the 17 goal statements adopted by the state board of education in 1976.

For more information contact:

Dr. Daniel B. Taylor
Superintendent of Free Schools
Charleston, West Virginia 25305
(304) 348-2681

- 1977, Local District:

Kanawha County, Charleston Several district-wide study committees have recommended to the board of education a plan calling for a two-part high school diploma. The second part of the diploma will be a transcript listing the individual student's basic competency attainment level. It is proposed that a test be used at grades 3, 6 and 9 for the identification of students needing remediation. A high school test will be either developed locally or purchased. Reading and mathematics are the competency areas to receive first attention. Final board of education action was taken in June of 1977.

For more information contact:

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Charleston, West Virginia 25311
(304) 348-7770

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WISCONSIN - 1977, State Department of Public Instruction: (Reported in UPDATE VI, 6/1/77)

In January of 1977, Barbara Thompson, the superintendent of public instruction, appointed a 29-person task force to study competency-based education in the fundamental subject areas of reading, writing and mathematics. The task force final recommendations will be submitted to the state superintendent in late June of 1977.

The task force will recommend three models of action the state department of public instruction might take. The first will center on local school district developed and determined competency standards with some department of public instruction (DPI) assistance in the form test item data bank; the second would make use of the intermediate school districts by having clusters of districts work together; and the third would be a research and experimentation model asking the DPI to study the issue until 1981.

- Fall 1977, State Department of Public Instruction:

The department of public instruction has an internal committee reviewing the recommendations of the task force.

For more information contact:

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WYOMING - 1977, State Board of Education:

In September and November of 1977, the Wyoming State Board of Education approved the following policy statement:

"All graduates of Wyoming Public High Schools will have completed a required secondary school program and have demonstrated proficiency in the basic skills essential to effective adult citizenship. Minimum state requirements for the issuing of a public high school diploma include:

1. successful completion of a program including credits or units identified in the Wyoming School Accreditation Standards equal to a regular course loan extending through the senior year of high school
2. sufficient attendance in courses and programs to gain fully the educational and social benefits of the secondary program
3. an ability to read, write, and compute with proficiency, and
4. an understanding of the process and structure of democratic governance and our free enterprise system.

Verification of the state standards for graduation is the responsibility of the local school district working in conjunction with the state department of education.

WYOMING - 1977, State Board of Education (continued):

Local school districts are required to establish their own standards of competency and program requirements for graduation and encouraged to go beyond those minimum standards established by the state board of education."

Several staff committees in the Wyoming department of education are working on statements or guidelines clarifying this board policy.

For more information contact:

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U.S. CONGRESS -- 1977 Legislation Pending:

Representative Ronald M. Mottl (D), member of Congress from the 23rd District in Ohio, introduced two identical bills--H. R. 6088 and H. R. 7116--amending Title VIII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. These bills called for states to establish a program of basic educational standards before they could receive funds under this Act. The bills also called for the establishment of a National Commission on Basic Education to review state plans and set standards. Hearings on these two bills were held in September of 1977. In October of 1977, Mottl introduced a third bill, H. R. 9574. This bill also carries the provision for a National Commission on Basic Education and would have states give a proficiency examination in reading, writing, and mathematics to students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12. The new bill stipulates that this test not be a requirement for graduation or grade promotion but does call for remedial programs for students failing the test.

The full text of H. R. 9574 is included in the appendix.

APPENDIX

Full text H. R. 9574

Minimal Competency Bibliography

95TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 9574

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 14, 1977

Mr. MOTTL introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

A BILL

To amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to provide assistance for the establishment of basic standards of educational proficiency applicable to public school students.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That title VIII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 881 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end thereof the following new section:

"BASIC EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

"SEC. 813. (a) (1) A State educational agency (or a local educational agency in the case of any such agency which is located in a State in which the State educational agency does not participate in the program under this sec-

tion) may receive financial assistance under this section by submitting to the Commission established under subsection (b) (1) an application which provides assurances that such educational agency will establish and implement basic standards of educational proficiency in accordance with a plan of such educational agency approved under subsection (b) (4). Such standards shall include the administration of proficiency examinations which primarily measure proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics to each student enrolled in public schools in the State or school district involved.

"(2) Such examinations shall be administered to a student at the beginning of the academic year at the sixth, eighth, tenth, and twelfth grade levels.

"(3) A passing grade in any such examination shall not be a requirement necessary for advancement in grade level or for graduation from secondary school.

"(4) Any student who fails any such examination shall be provided with an opportunity to participate in a remedial program in the subject matter covered by the examination.

"(5) Each such examination shall be designed to test proficiency in writing skills, reading and comprehension, and mathematics skills and comprehension. Such examination shall emphasize testing the ability of a student to use and understand language and to read with facility and understanding.

"(b) (1) There is hereby established a commission to be known as the National Commission on Basic Education (hereinafter in this section referred to as the 'Commission').

"(2) The Commission shall be composed of fifteen members as follows:

"(A) three appointed by the President from among individuals serving on State boards of education;

"(B) three appointed by the President from among individuals serving on local boards of education;

"(C) three appointed by the President from among persons employed as teachers in secondary school systems; and

"(D) six appointed by the President from members of the general public.

"(3) Members of the Commission shall serve without pay. While away from their homes or regular places of business, members of the Commission shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in the same manner as persons employed intermittently in the Government service are allowed expenses under section 5703 (b) of title 5, United States Code.

"(4) The Commission shall—

"(A) establish a series of basic standards of educational proficiency, including tests for measuring such proficiency, designed to evaluate the reading, writing,

and mathematics skills of students at the sixth, eighth, tenth, and twelfth grade levels; and make such series available to any State or local educational agency which requests the series in connection with an application for assistance under this section;

"(B) review applications for assistance under this section submitted by State or local educational agencies, and the plans contained in such applications for the establishment of basic standards of educational proficiency in accordance with subsection (a); and

"(C) approve such applications and plans if the Commission determines the standards to be established bear a reasonable relation to the educational proficiency needed by students at the various levels measured.

"(5) Each State educational agency and each local educational agency which desires to receive assistance under this section shall submit the plan referred to in paragraph (4) (B) at such time and in such manner as shall be established by the Commission, or after the termination of the Commission, by the Commissioner of Education.

"(6) The Commission shall transmit a report to the President and to the Congress, no later than three years after the effective date of this section, which contains a detailed statement of the activities of the Commission under this section. The Commission shall cease to exist thirty days after the transmission of such report. The Commissioner of Edu-

cation shall carry out the functions of the Commission under this section after the termination of the existence of the Commission.

"(c) (1) In the case of any school district in which standards of educational proficiency under this section, including the proficiency examinations, are not in effect, the Commissioner of Education shall carry out a program of making such examinations available directly to any student attending public schools in such district, upon the request of any parent of such student.

"(2) The Commissioner of Education shall carry out a program of grants to State educational agencies (and local educational agencies in the case of any such agency which is located in a State in which the State educational agency does not participate in the program under this section) in such amounts as the Commissioner of Education considers necessary to assist such educational agencies in preparing and administering basic standards, including examinations, submitted to the Commission under subsection (b) (4) (B), and to pay the costs of providing remedial programs to students in accordance with subsection (a) (4).

"(d) There are hereby authorized to be appropriated to carry out the provisions of this section such sums as may be necessary for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1978, and for each of the four fiscal years thereafter.".

95TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 9574

A BILL

To amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to provide assistance for the establishment of basic standards of educational proficiency applicable to public school students.

By Mr. MOTTL

OCTOBER 14, 1977

Referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

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